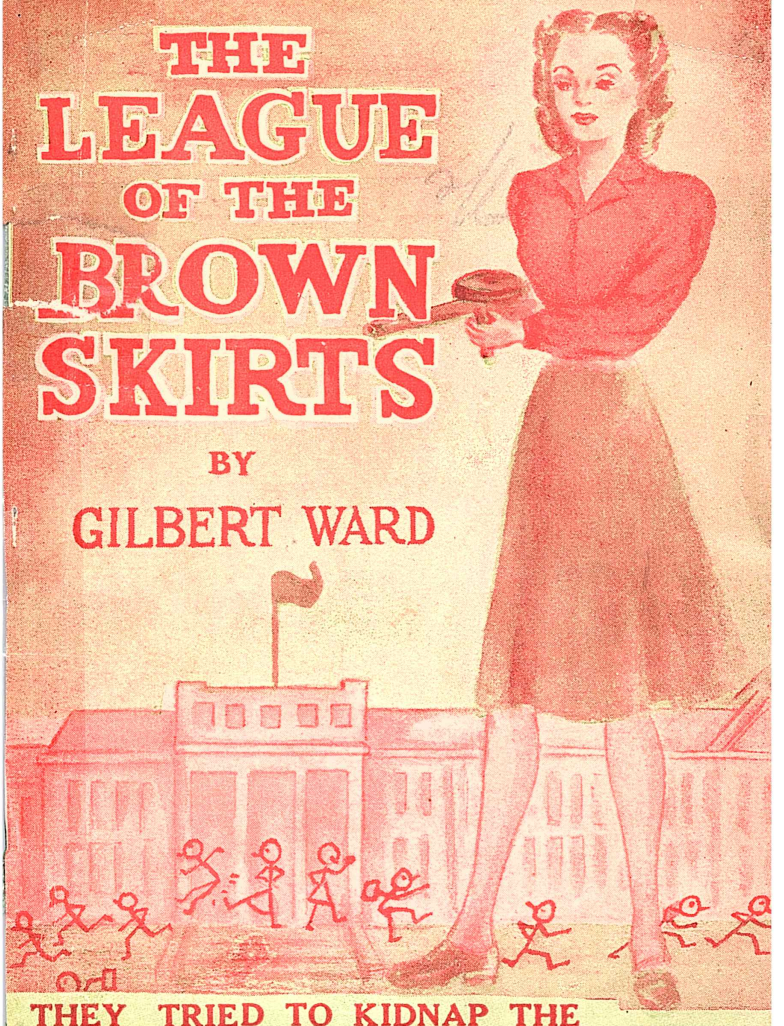
THE LEAGUE OF THE BROWN SKIRTS

BY

GILBERT WARD



THEY TRIED TO KIDNAP THE N.Z. PRIME MINISTER, BUT...

GYPSY

THE LEAGUE
OF THE
BROWN SKIRTS

BOOKS
by
GILBERT WARD

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The Hermit at the Hermitage

The Very Good Earth

The Wizards of Aussie

The League of the Brown Skirts

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By

GILBERT WARD

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NEW ZEALAND

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To
J.A.B.L.

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Chapter I

Men and women of all ages dashed headlong from the train as it slowed down alongside the platform at Ashburton.

Stark anxiety was written on their faces as they rushed with one accord in one direction.

One thought was in their minds. One great dread that they might be too late.

They had been warned, of course. The guard had not minced matters when he had intimated that there would be "Five Minutes at Ashburton for refreshment."

Jimmy Dentone was ahead of the mob, doing a steady forty miles an hour. He breasted the Refreshment Counter on record time, but what would you, Jimmy was the champion mile sprinter for the Otago University and promised to become a second Lovelock.

Only a few First Class passengers whose carriage had stopped right opposite the Refreshment Room, beat him to the love feast.

Jimmy secured a cup of tea and a bun and then sought to find his way out of the mob which had now closed in around him.

He was an old hand at the game.

Holding his tea and bun aloft, he used his rump as a sort of battering-ram and backed his way out of the crowd.

Once out of the seething mass of humanity, he steered his way to a corner shelf, cleverly dodging the 'also rans' who were still coming into the room, faint but pursuing.

He shared the shelf with a man whose face resembled that of a horse. He had huge protruding teeth and was making short work of a sandwich and a glass of milk.

Jimmy, with the same gusto, set to work on his bun, glancing round the room as he munched away.

Suddenly he nudged his companion. So suddenly indeed that the man spluttered into his glass of milk, and half the contents shot down the front of his coat.

"You clumsy devil," growled the man.

"Sorry old man, but I was going to draw your attention to the Minister of

Public Works. He's over there in the corner."

"What of it?" said the man sourly, as he dabbed his coat with his pocket handkerchief.

"I don't think you get me," said Jimmy. "It is the **Minister of Public Works.**

"Well, what's the excitement. He's not the Almighty is he?"

"No, but he is still comparatively young," Jimmy pointed out.

The man grunted.

"Before he is much older, he and the whole gang will be wiped off the face of the earth," said he, darkly.

"You don't say?"

"I do."

"And who is going to do the mopping up? The other crowd?"

"If you mean by 'the other crowd' the members of the Opposition, I would go further and say that they will also be blown sky high."

"Good heavens! You're not Guy Fawkes by any chance?"

The man showed his large teeth in a devilish smile.

"Guy Fawkes was a failure. WE will not fail."

And who are 'WE'?

The man just smiled and left the Refreshment Room.

Jimmy followed in a thoughtful frame of mind. The man was nuts of course. Probably escaped from some mental home. He decided to try him out on some rational conversation.

"Are you from Dunedin?"

"No, I'm from London."

"Oh!"

The man felt that Jimmy had emphasised the "Oh" a little two pointedly, but he let it pass.

Jimmy continued:

"Quite a crowd travelling to-day."

"Yes, a motley crew."

"True, true. Take that lady over there for instance. The one with a nose like a vulture."

"Which one?"

"The one in brown tweeds."

"That lady is my aunt," said the man, glaring at Jimmy.

"You are not following my eye," said

Jimmy. "I mean that long streak of humanity with eyes like door knobs. The one who is bullying the telegraph boy."

The man looked savagely at Jimmy, and his top lip curled back, thus adding quite another inch to his astonishing set of molars.

"That lady is my aunt, I tell you," he snarled.

For a moment Jimmy feared that the man would swoop down and bite him in the seat of his pants, but the man was merely indulging in a war of nerves.

Having reduced Jimmy to the size of a small worm, as he thought, he gave a growl and went off to join his aunt.

Little did Jimmy realise, that he had made his first acquaintance, but not his last, with a member of the famous League of Brown Skirts.

Chapter II

Jimmy did not contemplate seeing the "Man with the Teeth" again, though he figured that they might be fellow travellers on the Ferry Boat to Wellington. If so Jimmy decided to give him a wide berth.

After all when one has referred to a fellow's aunt as a 'long streak of humanity with eyes like door knobs and a nose like a buzzard' the only decent thing to do is to recede into the background and walk quietly out of that man's life.

Therefore, when he saw the man again, just after the Ferry Boat had left Lyttleton Wharf, he would, under ordinary circumstances, have avoided him but for the fact that this gentleman was carrying on a heated argument with a young girl. His manner was threatening and he was wagging his finger in the face of the damsel.

"What's all this," he said, walking up to them in the manner of a policeman about to settle a civil disturbance.

"Go away," growled the man taking

the girl by the shoulder in an attempt to take her elsewhere.

"It's all right," said the girl over her shoulder as she allowed herself to be piloted away.

Jimmy didn't agree with her. In fact he thought he detected a pleading look in her eyes. This coupled with the fact that she was a pretty little thing with big blue eyes and brown curly hair, made him feel that the fates wanted him to do his bit as a knight in shining armour.

He took a nimble step in front of them and faced the couple, thus blocking their progress.

"Look here young lady," he said, "If this man has been annoying you, just say the word and I will heave him overboard."

"I'd like to see you try," sneered the man.

"You'd better not tempt me," said Jimmy warmly. "I am by way of being a famous grappler. It's in my blood. My father was an All-Black."

The man sneered again. "I'm not surprised that you came of careless parents," he said.

"What do you mean?" demanded Jimmy hotly.

"Well you've just admitted that your father was a nigger."

"Spare me," groaned Jimmy in exasperation. "My dear man, your education has been sadly neglected.

Surely you don't think that an All Black is a nigger."

"An All-Black," said the girl to the man, much as a parent would address an idiot child, "An All-Black is a football player."

"Oh," said the man, in a way that would imply that a football player was after all not much more advanced in the social scale than a nigger.

Jimmy beamed at the girl. "I'm glad to know that you at least know about our country's national religion."

The girl smiled, "I ought to, I'm a New Zealander."

"Then what are you to this Londoner," Jimmy wanted to know.

"She is our maid," said the man.

Jimmy was surprised at this. Had the man said 'She is my nurse,' he would

have understood. A man who thinks an All Black is a nigger and who spills milk down his coat in Railway Refreshment Rooms needs a mental nurse to look after him.

"She is our maid," said the man, "and I would thank you not to interfere between master and servant."

"But you were threatening the girl," said Jimmy. "I distinctly saw you wagging that bony finger of yours in her face. You can't come over to this country and frighten one of our New Zealand girls, by wagging that sausage finger of yours in her face, even if she is your maid."

"What's the matter, Claude," boomed a voice at Jimmy's elbow.

Jimmy swung round.

The voice warned him that there was something unpleasant just at the back of him but he was unprepared for the face that glared down at him.

On the Ashburton platform, he had seen Claude's aunt from a distance and the sight was not easy on the eyes, but at close quarters the spectacle of this female buzzard was a thing at which even stronger

men than he would have shied.

Jimmy stood his ground however. Perhaps it was his medical training that stood by him. Your medical student sees many strange things in his time, from peculiar looking wiggly appendices to ingrowing toe nails. Jimmy therefore looked this lady squarely in the face without batting an eyelid.

Claude was speaking. "This man has been making a nuisance of himself. I was admonishing Madge for failing to pack my tooth brush at Dunedin and he came up and threatened to throw me overboard."

At the word tooth brush, Jimmy found himself again examining Claude's large teeth. It would need a pretty big tooth brush for those molars.

"Perhaps," said Jimmy, "the tooth brush would not be allowed on an ordinary passenger train. Madge here might have consigned it through on a cattle truck. In fact I noticed them hauling something on board with a crane just before we left Lyttleton."

Madge tittered.

The lady froze her with a look. "You

miserably wretch, be off with you. I will see you later, in my cabin.

The girl went.

"You can't talk to a girl like that," said Jimmy, hotly.

"I can call my maid what I like," declared the woman.

"Oh no you can't."

"Don't dare to talk to me like that, young man. Do you know who I am?"

"I've not the slightest idea."

"I am Mrs. Warrington Cumber-Glubber, one of the Staffordshire Cumber-Glubbers."

"Never heard of them," said Jimmy.

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber cast her eyes to heaven. "He has never heard of the Cumber-Glubbers," she cried, addressing the world at large. "My dear man, the Cumber-Glubbers came over with William the Conqueror. There have been Cumber-Glubbers in England for nearly nine hundred years. Claude here is the last of the Cumber-Glubbers."

"And a darned good thing too," said Jimmy.

"Look here," said Claude, prodding

Jimmy in the vest with his finger. "I won't stand for this."

Jimmy brushed his finger aside. "I wasn't talking to you, Horseteeth.

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber gasped.

"Did I hear him call you 'Horseteeth'?" she asked incredulously.

"Oh it's nothing to what he called you yesterday, auntie dear."

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber shot her head forward like a terrier scenting a rat. "What did he call me, Claude?"

Jimmy made good his escape. He was not prepared to stand by and witness Mrs. Cumber-Glubber's reaction to the revelation which Claude was about to make. Jimmy was a brave man and the son of an All Black, but there is a limit, even, to the courage of a New Zealand University Student.

Chapter III

Jimmy did not go straight to his father's home on landing at Wellington. He had a shave at his favourite barber's in Lambton Quay. He also went to a garage to inspect some second-hand cars, having a mind to buy one for his summer vacation.

It was near lunch time when he finally reached home.

His father greeted him warmly. They were very close friends, these two. John Dentone was proud of his son. The lad had the makings of a good football player and, as an afterthought, might even make a good doctor. Strange are the workings of an All Black's mind. John Dentone may have had visions of his son one day setting up in Wellington as a doctor, but the thought that crossed his mind as he greeted his strapping son was that one day Jimmy might be selected as an All Black.

"That was a great show you put up

against the Pirates," he said as he led him into the study.

"Not bad," agreed Jimmy.

"Tell me what chances do you think Otago will have for the Ranfurly Shield next season. You will be playing of course."

"Afraid not, Dad. You see I shall be in my last year at 'Varsity, and will have to do a lot of swot."

"Of course, of course! Yes there is your medical career, isn't there? By the way how are you shaping?"

"Pretty good I think. Mind you, one of the examiners got me a bit rattled at times, but he's not a bad sort really. He gave me good marks in the exam."

"That's fine."

"How have you been getting along Dad? Did you manage to buy in those shares?"

Jimmy was referring to the shares in the Dentone Chemical Company. A big parcel of them had been owned by a friend of his dad. The man had died and the shares had gone to a distant relative in England.

Now that the Dentone Chemical Company was about to embark on a big undertaking, his father was anxious to own sufficient shares to have full control of the Company. The distant relative coming out from England had been most stubborn about selling and for about a year things had been standing still.

"The owner of those shares is in the house at this moment," replied his father.

"You mean that you are on the verge of making a deal?"

"Unfortunately not but I have invited her to stay with us for a while. I heard that she couldn't get a flat in Wellington so I thought I might get on her soft side by offering her temporary accommodation. Who knows, we might make a deal while she is under my roof."

"You crafty old fox."

John Dentone grinned like a boy. "You will have to be specially nice to her, Jimmy.

"If she's young and pretty, that won't be hard."

"You'll see her at lunch," was all that his father would say, so Jimmy was left

to make his own mental picture of what the guest would be like.

He was not to be left wondering for long.. The lunch gong went and he followed his father into the dining room. A few minutes later there came through the door no less a person than Mrs. Warrington Cumber-Glubber, closely followed by her nephew Claude.

It speaks well for the ancient lineage of Old England, that Mrs. Cumber-Glubber took the surprise with remarkable calm. Claude's bottom jaw may have fallen a fraction from his upper teeth, but on the whole, the blood of the Cumber-Glubbers kept at normal pressure.

"So this is your son," said the female of the species. "How very interesting. Very interesting indeed. We met on the boat coming over."

"Splendid!" said Mr. Dentone, rubbing his hands. "Then you are practically friends already. I hope you will be more so as the days go by. You'll like my boy."

"Haw," said Claude.

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber smiled with sickening oiliness.

"I am sure we shall like him. Such a charming young man. Full of what one might call 'New Zealand courtesy' don't you think, Mr. Dentone?"

"I'm glad you like him," said Dentone. "Well, what about a spot of lunch?"

The spot of lunch entertained Jimmy.

It was an education to watch Claude negotiating the soup past his teeth.

To see him snap at a carrot was most fascinating. The Comrades of the French Revolution, watching the guillotine at work could not have been better entertained.

There were times when Jimmy thought that the teeth would over-reach themselves and snap the fork clean through, but Claude's timing was excellent. Altogether a wonderful performance!

During the meal Jimmy learned that since Mrs. Cumber-Glubber had arrived from England twelve months ago she had interested herself in forming a sort of Women's Friendly Society called "The Daughters of Zealandia." The first Annual Convention was to be held in the City that week and she had asked Mr. Dentone if she could have the use of the library for

the meeting of the Grand Council.

Mr. Dentone readily agreed. It was his intention to do all in his power to please her.

"By the way," he said, just before the conclusion of the meal. "About those shares . . ."

"Another time, Mr. Dentone, another time." And with that, Mr. Dentone had to be content.

Chapter IV

When Jimmy retired to his room that night, he was surprised to find a letter addressed to him, propped up on the dressing table.

Somewhat intrigued, he tore the flap and extracted its contents. This is what he read.

Dear Mr. Dentone,

I want you to come to my room as soon as you read this note. There is something I want to tell you about Mrs. Cumber-Glubber. It is very important and I need your help. My room is the one on the right at the end of the passage.

Madge Heatherway.

Jimmy considered the epistle for a moment. This Madge was the girl, of course, he had seen on the ferry. What was it she had to tell him! Perhaps the old girl had been ill-treating her. He decided to answer the summons.

Madge was walking up and down the room when he presented himself. She seemed deep in thought.

"Sit down, Mr. Detone," she said as she perched herself on the end of the bed.

A little puzzled, Jimmy sat down. Madge did not act at all like an ill-treated maid. Her attitude was like that of some business executive.

"First of all," she began. "I am not a lady's maid. I am really sailing under false colours."

"Oh!"

"As a matter of fact I am a newspaper reporter."

Jimmy whistled and leaned forward. "This is very interesting," he said. "A newspaper reporter in the employ of Mrs. Cumber-Glubber. I had no idea she was so important."

"She is very dangerous," said the girl.

"Don't tell me she is a member of an international band of crooks, and that she is after our family jewels."

"She plans to steal more than jewels," said the girl. "As a matter of fact, she is a budding Hitler."

"Great Scott!"

Madge laughed merrily at Jimmy's look of amazement. Then she became serious again.

"Have you ever heard of **The Brown Skirts?** asked the girl.

"You mean **The Brown Shirts."**

"No I mean **The Brown Skirts** a much lower form of monkey business.

"I can't say that I have."

"I didn't expect you would. I think my newspaper is the only organ that has tumbled to it. You have heard, of course, of **The Daughters of Zealandia."**

"Oh yes. In fact I heard about them only a few hours ago. Mrs. Cumber-Glubber is the Grand Chieftainess or something. Dad is letting her have the library tomorrow night for the meeting of the Grand Council."

"That's news," said the girl with interest. "I'm glad I got hold of you. Your news means that we shall have to work fast."

"Now look here," said Jimmy, "I'm all in the dark over this business. What's all this about the **Brown Skirts.** Tell me

everything my sweet little fellow-conspirator.

"Very well," said the girl. Here is the story:

"At the time when the Fascist Party was having its little game in England, Mrs. Cumber-Glubber was in charge of the organising of the female section of this menagerie. When the whole scheme fell through, she was like a fish out of water."

"Naturally," said Jimmy.

"Then without any apparent reason she decided a year ago to come and live in New Zealand."

"The best thing she ever did," said Jimmy.

"That is as it may be," said the girl, "but my editor got a tip from a journalist friend in London, that on the eve of her departure she held a secret meeting at her home at which some of the most militant of the female Fascists were present. He advised my editor that the Cumber-Glubber was worth watching."

"So you got the job of trailing her."

"Exactly. Well for a time nothing happened. Then she formed this 'Daught-

ers of Zealandia Society,' and I tried to join of course, but there was as much chance of getting into that Society as an elephant has of getting into a match-box. The Society did not seem to welcome members from the general public."

"Somewhat fishy, eh?"

"Decidedly fishy."

"And how did you become maid to the great Mrs. Cumber-Glubber?"

"That was easy. She advertised for a lady-companion and as the advertisement was handed in to my paper, I was on her door-step hours ahead of any other applicant. All I had to do was to look simple and Mrs. Cumber-Glubber welcomed me with open arms. These dames advertise for a lady-companion, but what they want is someone who will work sixteen hours a day. No maid would work so long, but a shrewd woman can jolly a so-called lady's-companion along (under the guise of comradeship), to do all the house-work, the cooking, the gardening and also a little dressmaking and house decorating in her spare time! Well, after a while all pretence was dropped, she referred to me

openly as her maid, and poor simple Madge stayed on."

Madge paused for a minute, then continued:

"During the six months that I have been with her I have discovered some strange things. I have done a little snooping, and what with piecing this and that together, I have discovered that the Daughters of Zealandia is a 'blind' so that they can meet in secret like the Masons without the Police getting inquisitive. The Daughters of Zealandia call themselves **The Brown Skirts,** behind closed doors."

"And their objective?"

"To establish a Totalitarian State in New Zealand ruled exclusively by women."

"Not a bad idea," grinned Jimmy. "Why should men have the exclusive right to rule. Give the ladies a trial, that's what I say."

"I agree with you my dear man. Who knows but that one day, women M.P.'s might have a majority in the House and thus become the Government. Nevertheless even a Women's Party should rule only by

the will of the people, but that's not Mrs. Cumber-Glubber's idea. She, like Hitler means to seize power by wile, and remain in power by force. She would set up a Totalitarian State complete with female Gestapo. 'A Delilah in Every Home' is her slogan, and you know what Delilah did for Samson.

"She would have man in chains, what?"

"And then some. She has a policy all cut and dried. Every man in the country would shiver in his shoes if he knew what she planned to do with them when she seizes power."

Jimmy sat up with interest. "What is her policy?" he asked, eagerly.

"I know very little at present," Madge admitted. "That is for us to discover and that is where you can help me. For instance you say that the Grand Council will meet in your father's library to-morrow night. Is there a place in that library where I can hide?"

Jimmy thought for a moment, then he slapped his knee with delight.

"I have it! The very thing. The

trophy cupboard."

"The trophy cupboard?"

"Yes it is situated in a recess on the left side of the fire-place. Dad keeps all sorts of things in it. Fishing rods, golf clubs, shot-guns and Maori curios. I'll get it cleaned out. It shall be your listening post."

Madge sprang from the bed and clapped her hands.

"Splendid, splendid," she cried.

Jimmy took her hand in his. "Madge my dear we are going to make a great team. We should go well in double harness. Why dash it all we might even end up by getting married."

A dreamy look came into Madge's eyes.

"The man who helps me to spike the Cumber-Glubber's guns can have me on a silver tray."

"Well that's fair enough," admitted Jimmy. "I mean to say one can not have anything fairer than that."

Madge laughed and pinched his cheek. "Come along you silly chump. You'd better go back to your room. Get

busy on the job to-morrow. I'll meet you in the orchard in the afternoon at two o'clock."

"It's a deal," said Jimmy.

Chapter V

The next morning, Jimmy strolled down to the potting shed where he found Angus the gardener.

"Good morning Angus, how is the Prime Minister this morning?"

Angus grinned. He never tired of being called the Prime Minister. It was a standing joke between them. Angus bore a striking resemblance to the Prime Minister of New Zealand. All his cronies down at the "Four Crowns" chaffed him about it, and many a drink he had had on the strength of it.

"Glad to see you back Master Jimmy," he said. "They tell me that next year you will be coming back a full fledged doctor."

"I hope so, Angus. Tell me, will you be making me Director of Public Health?"

"That I would gladly do if I were Prime Minister in name as well as in resemblance," laughed Angus. "I would do anything for you Master Jimmy."

Jimmy took the gardener by the arm.

"There's one thing you can do for me right now," he whispered.

"And what may that be?"

"I want some mice. Live ones. They are still as thick as ever in the barn, I take it."

"Yes plenty of them, but I catch them dead. I have some rare fine traps."

"Do you still have that cage trap?"

"Yes but the spring traps are better."

"What about setting the cage trap for a change."

Angus looked shrewdly at Jimmy. "You'll be after some mischief I take it. Will you never grow up Master Jimmy?"

Jimmy laughed. "Look here Angus, catch me some live mice by seven to-night and I'll give you a half-crown a head."

"I'll do my best," grinned Angus. "But I can't promise many, not in the day time."

"Have a shot at it anyway," said Jimmy. "I'll be down here at seven to collect the 'bag'."

Angus walked thoughtfully to the barn after Jimmy had left him. "Now I wonder what the lad is up to," he murmured to himself.

Jimmy found his father in the rose garden.

"I say Dad, can I have the key to the trophy cupboard?"

"Thinking of having a game of golf," asked his father.

"No, I want to empty it."

"Whatever for."

"To make room for a tenant."

John Dentone looked surprised. Jimmy decided to enlighten his father. He told him of his conversation with Madge. During the recital his father's face was a study in mixed emotions. When Jimmy had finished, he blurted out, "Hang it all man, the thing's fantastic. Do you mean to tell me that that darned woman thinks she can come out here and rule New Zealand?"

"There's no knowing what a woman can do if she sets her mind on it. Look at Joan of Arc! Look at Boadicea!"

"But a Totalitarian State. That sort of thing could not happen in New Zealand."

"Of course it could. New Zealand would be easier than Europe. It's a small

country. The very place for experiments. It was the first place to have a Social Security. Why shouldn't it be the cradle for World Dominion by Women?"

John Dentone snorted. "How does this woman think she can bring it off."

"That's what we have to find out."

"You bet we'll find out. This country is no place for Fascists, male or female. Hitler was bad enough, but a female Hitler would be ten times worse."

The two then commenced to make plans. Dentone would show Mrs. Cumber-Glubber round the Chemical Works that afternoon while Jimmy prepared the cupboard in the library. Dentone quickly lost his anger during the planning and he was grinning like a schoolboy before they had finished.

That night while dinner was in progress, Madge slipped unostentatously into the library and took up her place in the cupboard. Jimmy made some excuse to leave the dinner table and locked her in. She was safe from discovery. The stage was set.

Chapter VI

Mrs. Warrington Cumber-Glubber, Grand Chieftainess of The Daughters of Zealandia and Leader of The Brown Skirts, took her place at the head of the table and surveyed the members of her Grand Council. She was well pleased with her small gang of satellites. A small band of followers, it is true, but they were women of the right stamp, women who would stand no nonsense. Mrs. Cumber-Glubber was satisfied. Mind you she had had her disappointments during the early stages of the movement. She had hoped, when she first came to New Zealand to enlist the aid of Leaders of such organisations as the National Council of Women, The Women's Institute and the Women's Branch of the Farmers' Union, but discreet enquiries had found that though these leaders were keen on better representation of women in the affairs of the country, they sought to further their aims in a proper

constitutional way. She had therefore to fall back on a few disgruntled members of the community, women who had been put in their place by the above mentioned organisations, women who had tried to get on to City Councils and such, and had failed, and women with axes to grind.

There was Mrs. Blitherington for instance, her Grand Provost, a big woman with a jaw like Mussolini, who had divorced three husbands and was now a confirmed man-hater. She hailed from Wellington.

The Grand Chamberlain was a spinster of some fifty summers, to say nothing of winters. She was of the lean kind and her long drooping nose practically hid her thin lips. She wore an ancient pair of pince-nez which seemed to threaten any minute to slide down the length of her nasal organ. Miss Pottersnype came from Dunedin, and the frost was in her blood. She had been jilted thirty years ago by a man who had evidently been warned in a dream of his impending doom.

Mrs. Perks-Crofter, the Grand Tyler was a little woman with a pug nose and small brown eyes. Her husband had died

of indigestion (said those who knew his wife) caused by an almost exclusive diet of fish and chips and pies, Mrs. Perks-Crofter being in the habit of attending afternoons and catching the 5-30 bus home.

The Grand Constable, Mrs Crippon-gorger was a huge woman, standing six feet three inches in her stocking feet.

An accident of birth had prevented her from following her true vocation, that of a Regimental Sergeant Major. She had a face like a man. Her hair was cut short and her jaw was like the front portion of a Bristol Bomber.

These four, together with Mrs. Cumber-Glubber, made up the **Big Five**. Seven other women made up the twelve on the Grand Council. They were yes-women, a necessary part of any Council, grand or otherwise.

It speaks well for the splendid character of our New Zealand womanhood, that Mrs. Cumber-Glubber had to search the whole of the Country with a small tooth comb to scratch together this small band of Black Sheep. She would have liked more, but happily, they were not to

be found in this far flung corner of the British Empire.

Finally there was the Grand Secretary, her nephew, Claude. His only asset in this female organisation, apart from his secretarial duties, was, that he might some day breed a daughter of Cumber-Glubber blood to follow Mrs. Cumber-Clubber as her successor to the Presidency of New Zealand.

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber rose to address the Grand Council.

They sprang to their feet and raised their right arms.

Hail, Cumber-Glubber!

She bade them be seated.

"Comrades, we are here to-night to make final plans for taking over control of this country."

"Hail, Hail!"

"For years the women of this country have had a vote. They have held amongst them sufficient votes to send a Women's Government to Parliament, but what did they do? At every Election they voted for men. For years they have flung their birthright into the ballot box for a mess of male

pottage. They have allowed themselves to be ruled by man. Some of them I grant you have ruled their men-folk at home, but they have never thought to organise, and rule their country as well. Now it is left to a few of us to force the issue."

"Hear, Hear."

"It is fortunate that I have succeeded in getting around me a chosen few who, like myself are . . .

"Nuts," whispered Madge in the cupboard.

"Not afraid to take drastic measures. It is true that Mrs. Crippongorger, our Gestapo Chief, has not been successful in finding sufficient women in New Zealand to form an underground movement so necessary for our coup. We have therefore adopted the famous infiltration method. Our "Tourists" are arriving daily from other countries."

The council exchanged glances. They knew all about these "Tourists." Was it not the infiltration of so-called tourists that paved the way for conquest in Europe. Hitler was diabolically clever. Send an army to invade a country and they will be

met at the fronteer with guns and tanks, but dress that army in plus fours and holiday garb and they are welcomed with open arms.

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber continued. "These 'Tourists" are making good headway. All of them know the arts of a woman's craft. They are making friends of the members of the Radio Stations. They have charmed some of our leading Police Officials. Quartermaster Sergeants in charge of arms and ammunition are easy meat to them and we all know that Sailors don't care.

Our Gestapo Chief tells me that even at this moment the managing director of a well known firm of gun-smiths is holidaying at Mount Cook with one of our 'Tourist' Brown Skirts. She will arrange for a raid on his stock in trade.

(Laughter from the Council)

"When the 'Hour strikes, Tourists will be sight-seeing around the Radio Stations. They will be down at the ports looking over battle-ships. They will be admiring the architecture of our Police Stations and they will be taking Quartermaster Serg-

eants for a ride.

"And what about the Prime Minister," asked one of the Council.

"He will be kidnapped."

The Council gasped.

Truly Mrs. Cumber-Glubber was a great organiser.

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber paused to let this startling statement sink in. She took a swig of water during the lull. Her followers gazed at her with admiration. Here was a woman who could talk about kidnapping the Prime Minister and then calmly throw back a glass of water.

"The capture of the Prime Minister," she went on, "is necessary to our plans. Once in our hands he will be made to send out instructions to his Ministers to meet him at a certain place. When we have the whole Cabinet in our hands we shall strike. The mysterious disappearance of the whole Cabinet will suggest guilt on their part for the trumped up charges, which we shall put over the radio at half-hour intervals, on the night we take over the Government of this country."

"To maintain law and order, our

'tourist' Brown Skirts will patrol the streets of every town, with tommy-guns. And let me tell you comrades, a female at the end of a tommy-gun can be a very dangerous person to meddle with."

She was right there. No man in his senses would try to take a tommy-gun from a woman with a nervous trigger finger.

"Once in power," continued Mrs Cumber-Glubber, "we shall put into force our new Constitution of Women's Rights. Most of you are familiar with the outlines of this Constitution but I would like to run over with you to-night, some of the clauses of our Marriage Act."

She leaned over and whispered to Claude who started to hunt through his papers.

While they are thus engaged, let us take a peep into the hall and see what Jimmy is doing.

He had succeeded in procuring from Angus, five live mice and he was at that moment standing outside the library door. There was a heavy curtain on the inside of the door and Jimmy was therefore able to open the door a fraction without anything

being noticed by the occupants of the room. Even without the curtain, it is a question whether the opening of the door would have been observed, because the ladies were engrossed with the finding of the Marriage Act.

Jimmy carefully inserted a small cage into the opening, then he raised the little wire door. The mice made good their escape into the sheltered portions of the library. Jimmy withdrew the empty cage and quietly closed the door. The task completed he joined his father in the lounge.

Blissfully ignorant of the recent infiltration of rodent 'tourists" Mrs. Cumber-Glubber took the Marriage Act from her nephew.

She addressed the gathering.

"You all know that under the new Constitution all men will become the chattels of women. Now let me read Clause One. Every male on reaching the age of twenty will be required to register on Form Y628 when he will be issued. . ."

There was a squeak from Miss Potter-snype.

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber frowned.

"What is the matter Miss Pottersnype?"

"I thought I saw a mouse," she said in a trembling voice.

The Council glared at her. Here was their leader about to feed them on the balm of the new Marriage Act, and this silly idiot had to start seeing imaginary mice.

"Be quiet, woman," thundered Mrs. Crippongorger.

Miss Pottersnype set her lips with spartan courage and sat at attention.

"Mrs. Cumber-Glubber commenced again. "Every male on reaching . . ."

"Ooooer!" exclaimed Mrs Crippongorger.

"Mercy!" exclaimed Mrs. Perks-Crofter.

"Whatever has come over you?" demanded their Leader.

Mrs. Crippongorger was now standing. Her big face was ashen.

"A mouse ran over my feet just now."

"And mine too," cried Mrs. Perks-Crofter.

Miss Pottersnype screamed and jumped on the table.

Mrs. Blitherington made for the door in panic.

"Silence!" roared Mrs Cumber-Glubber. "Have you all taken leave of your senses? Of all the . . . ."

At that moment, a mouse scared out of its wits by the commotion ran up the table leg and tried to hide under Clause Two of the Marriage Act.

Another one scurried along the floor, closely followed by a third.

Claude threw the ink bottle at them, missed, and hit Mrs. Crippongorger in the face.

Mrs. Crippongorger swore and wiped the ink from her left eye.

Meanwhile there was a stampede for the door, Mrs. Cumber-Glubber a born leader, was there first. The door was dragged open, and for a moment they became jammed in the opening.

It is impossible for eleven women to. go through a doorway at the same time.

The twelth woman, Miss Pottersnype was still on the table. She was afraid to

cross the room. Nevertheless it was she who finally got things moving.

With one mighty leap she landed on the shoulders of Mrs. Cumber-Glubber.

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber shot forward, made a wild attempt to keep on the perpendicular, then crashed forward on her face, her nose burying itself deep into the thick pile of the hall carpet.

Miss Pottersnype landed on top of her..

Then they both disappeared from view under an avalanche of arms, bodies and legs belonging to the remaing ten members of The Grand Council of The Daughters of Zealandia.

If Mrs. Cumber-Glubber had been a Queen Bee she could not have hoped for a better swarm!

Jimmy and his father arrived on the scene at this moment.

"What sort of horse-play is this?" he demanded.

"I wonder who's got the ball?" asked Jimmy.

"The one underneath, of couse," said his father, who in his All-Black career,

had seen similar piles of bodies.

Jimmy put his fingers to his mouth and blew the 'referee's whistle.'

They then started to remove the pile of humanity, layer by layer.

Claude came to their assistance and he made moaning noises because it seemed ages before they got down to his aunt's body.

With the "swarm" removed, Mrs. Cumber-Glubber lay on her face, panting for a while. It was plain to see that she had not fainted, but Jimmy seemed to show an amazing ignorance, for a medical student in his last year, because he promptly took up a huge bowl of flowers from the hall table and emptied the contents including about two quarts of water, over the head of the prostrate woman.

Jimmy's father, not to be outdone in the matter of First Aid ran nimbly to the hall stand, grabbed up another bowl of flowers and carried it back with a gleam in his eye. He was frustrated however, because he found Mrs. Cumber-Glubber sitting up glaring terribly at him, like a basilisk.

Sighing, he turned and restored the bowl to its place. Jimmy had all the luck, it seemed.

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber rose to her feet like an evil genii coming out of a bottle. She towered over Jimmy.

"Why did you throw that water over me?" she demanded.

"Thought you had fainted. First aid you know."

"First aid, my foot! You did it on purpose. And while I think of it, who put those mice in the library?"

"What mice?" asked Jimmy innocently.

All the ladies started to talk at once.

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber silenced them. "I am waiting," she said to Jimmy, tapping her foot.

Jimmy's father spoke. "If you are accusing my son of playing tricks I can put you right on that. He has been with me all evening in the lounge. And as for mice being in the library, I'm not surprised because I suspect there is a nest of them somewhere. I was going to set some traps to-night."

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber wanted to believe this explanation, because she did not want to be tormented with the thought that anyone was near the library to hear what they had had to say that night.

"Very well," she said. "We will leave it at that."

She turned to the women. "You can all go now. Our meeting is adjourned. You will be advised concerning our next meeting."

She waited until they were gone then she said to Claude. "Gather up all the papers and come upstairs. I am going to bed."

She declined Mr. Dentone's offer of a glass of wine, and she departed upstairs.

After Claude had followed her, Jimmy's father kept guard in the hall while his son went into the library to release Madge.

When Jimmy opened the cupboard door, several mice ran out.

Madge's face was flushed with anger.

"You blithering idiot," she said.

Jimmy was taken aback. "What's the trouble?" he asked.

Madge propped the Maori spear against the back of the cupboard and stepped into the room. It was obvious that she had been using the spear to keep the invading mice at bay.

"You know why I am angry. I heard what Mrs. Cumber-Glubber said in the hall. She accused you of putting those mice in the library."

"Well?"

"She was right."

"Madge dear, I cannot tell a lie. Yes, I was the culprit, but it was worth it. If you had seen the stampede of the Brown Skirts you would have appreciated the whole thing."

"I was too busy making passes at those wretched mice, with a spear, to concern myself with what was happening outside."

"Surely you were not afraid. Don't tell me that. I'd hate to think that the idol of my dreams had feet of clay."

"I was not afraid," declared Madge hotly, "and I am not the idol of your dreams as you call me. I have finished with you, Jimmy Dentone. Finished for

good."

Jimmy tried, unsuccessfully, to take her hand.

"Have mercy Madge my love. What have I done to deserve this?"

"You have done plenty. You broke up a meeting just when I was beginning to hear things. Things that would have startled the whole of New Zealand. And now you have spoilt everything."

"I am sorry."

"So you should be. It was rotten team work on your part. From now on I am going to work on my own."

"But Madge. . . ."

Madge tossed her head in the air and left him.

Jimmy hurried after her, but she was disappearing up the stairs when he reached the hall."

"Dash it," he said.

"What's the matter, lad," asked his father. "Lover's quarrel?"

" 'fraid so."

"Don't worry," said the worldly wise father. "She'll get over it."

"I wonder," said Jimmy ruefully.

Chapter VII.

Jimmy did not see Madge during the whole of the next morning.

He felt that the girl was avoiding him.

Nor did he see much chance of a reconciliation, because Mrs. Cumber-Glubber had announced at breakfast that they would be leaving for the north shortly.

That meant that Madge would be accompanying them.

It was not a pleasant thought that Madge might be going right out of his life, for, in spite of his flippant manner when in her company, he was beginning to like Madge a lot.

The arrival of the second-hand car after lunch, distracted his mind a little, and after making a deal with the car-salesman, he took delivery and drove the machine out on to the main highway.

But he was not in the mood for a long drive. A little down the road he stopped the car and gave himself up to much thought.

Yes he liked the girl. Dash it all he loved the wench. He pictured himself in their new home sitting down to dinner. The surgery bell would ring, and she would say "Finish your dinner darling, I'll answer the door." Then he would hear her sweet voice in the passage, saying, "The doctor will not be long. Will you please step into the waiting room."

Jimmy leaned back in the driving seat and sighed.

It was then that he saw the reflection of a figure in the mirror above him.

He sat up quickly.

It was Madge.

She was clad in a snappy little outfit and was evidently out for a walk.

Sinking back in the seat he allowed her to come abreast of the car.

"Hoi!" he called.

She jumped.

When she saw him, she frowned and continued on her way.

He alighted quickly and caught up with her.

"Look here you little cat. What's all this high and mightiness?" He took her

by the shoulders.

"Let me go, or I'll call a policeman," she threatened.

"Oh no you won't," he said, leading her gently back to the car. "Get inside there, we have got to have this out."

A Chinaman on a nearby allotment had straightened his back and was watching them with interest.

Madge decided to get into the car. She had no desire to provide a free entertainment for this Oriental gentleman.

"Drive on a little," she commanded Jimmy.

As Jimmy started the car, the Chinaman smiled approvingly. He winked at Jimmy. The Chinaman's grandfather had been a bandit in China and he was quick to recognise what he took to be a neat piece of kidnapping.

Jimmy brought the car to a standstill in a quiet spot on the road under some shady trees.

"Now what's the trouble?" he asked.

Madge sat away from him. Her attitude was decidedly unfriendly.

She said:

Do you realise that they were just about to discuss the new Marriage Act when you broke up the meeting?"

"The new Marriage Act? Gee, that's interesting."

"It would have been but for your tomfoolery."

"Isn't there anything I can do to make amends?"

"I wouldn't trust you again Jimmy Dentone. Not if you were the last man in the world.

"Oh come, come."

Madge thought for a moment. Perhaps she could use him after all. A newspaper reporter must not allow sentiment to interfere with business. If there was any dirty work to be done, why not make Jimmy do it.

"Do you think you would be any good at burglary?" she asked.

Jimmy gave a whoop of delight. She was coming round. He put his arm round her shoulders. "Madge my dear I'd even do a spot of murder for you. Oh my glorious Lady Macbeth, give me the daggers. Sir James is at your service."

In his enthusiasm he gave her a hug.

It is wonderful what a hug will do. Properly timed, of course. Had Jimmy attempted to hug in a sort of wheedling attempt to make up the quarrel he might have received a sharp smack on the face for his pains. But given under the guise of boyish enthusiasm, it had the opposite effect.

The mother instinct is strong in every girl. She might resent a wheedling lover but there is a soft spot in her heart for a naughty boy.

Madge laughed and playfully ruffled his hair.

"You big overgrown boy," she said. "I suppose I'll have to forgive you. Now listen. Claude is the secretary of this outfit and he keeps all his papers in a small leather suit-case. The full Constitution of Mrs. Cumber-Glubber's Totalitarian Government, including the new Marriage Act, is bound to be in his possession because he had it all ready for the meeting last night. We must get hold of those papers to-night. I have a special camera in my possession which I have had by me for such an emer-

gency as this. I could take photostat copies of the Constitution and have the papers returned to his suitcase without him knowing. Do you think you could get me those papers?"

Jimmy laughed a careless laugh. "My dear little conspirator, I'll get those papers from Claude even if I have to batter his body into one solid mass of dough."

"You must not do that. Remember no suspicion must be aroused. You must burgle those papers by stealth."

"Very well," agreed Jimmy, somewhat reluctantly. "Just as you say."

Madge laughed softly. It was she who administered the hug this time. It was a very nice hug. No man can teach a girl points on this interesting pastime.

Little wonder that Jimmy started to sing as he put the car into motion and drove along the road. He finished singing "The Robbers' Chorus," then he said,

"I take it that this is your afternoon off? How about a little trip to the zoological gardens? I can show you a bird there, the very image of Mrs. Cumber-Glubber."

"Take me where you like," said

Madge happily.

. . . .

There were many visitors at the Zoo that afternoon, for the sun was shining brightly as only the sun can shine in wonderful New Zealand.

Wellington was enjoying that rare meteorological phenomena, a windless day. Madge and Jimmy had seen the lions, the bears, the monkeys and also a vicious looking old bird that Jimmy christened "The Cumber-Glubbarious."

They were now sitting under a shady tree, idly watching the passers by.

Suddenly, Madge clutched Jimmy's arm.

"Do you see what I see?" she whispered.

Jimmy was aroused from a pleasant contemplation of a band of young ladies who were being conducted round the Gardens by a female much older than themselves.

"All I can see," he said, "is a bevy of remarkably good looking girls."

"I know," said Madge sarcastically. "From the look in your eyes I knew you

were not examining the contours of the hippopotamus. Well as it so happens I am referring to those same young ladies. Of course you can't see what I see. You seem interested only in their figures."

"Purely from a medical point of view," said Jimmy. "They are fine strapping Amazons."

"But do you see what they are wearing."

"The usual, I suppose."

"You silly mugwump, all those girls are wearing **Brown Skirts."**

"By Jove! So they are."

Madge nodded knowingly. "And let me tell you Jimmy my lad, those girls are 'tourists,' or I'm a Dutchman."

She went on to tell him all about Mrs. Cumber-Glubber's "Tourists" and what part they were going to play in the "Great Coup."

Jimmy whistled.

"Of course," said he after a moment of thought, they may be just ordinary College damsels. Several schools in New Zealand go in for brown. There's one in the South Island for instance."

"Gym skirts certainly, but not ordinary skirts such as these young ladies are wearing," Madge pointed out.

"That's true," admitted Jimmy. "What do you say to me doing a spot of investigating?"

"The most sensible thing you have said all the afternoon," was Madge's comment.

The Brown Skirts had reached the monkey house. Jimmy joined the spectators and worked his way alongside the leader of the girls. The leader was not what one might call 'an oil painting' and she was the last person who should have allowed herself to be seen near the monkey house. To do so was to invite comment. Jimmy possessed too much breeding of course, as a University Student to pass any unkind comments.

He addressed the lady in a friendly fashion.

"Trickly little things, these monkeys, don't you think?" he said by way of opening the conversation.

"They remind me of men," was that lady's comment.

"A decidedly nasty dig," thought Jimmy. Here was he deliberately refraining from making personal remarks and yet she with utter disregard for the rules of cricket, had bowled a fast one before he could place his bat.

Jimmy was on the point of retaliating with a very obvious comment, but like a gentleman he said nothing. After all, environment makes a difference to a man, and Jimmy, one must remember, had lived for several years in the refined company of Dunedin Medical Students.

He decided to change the subject.

"To what branch of the Girl Guides does your party belong?"

"They are not Girl Guides," said the lady sternly. They are Public School Girls, from England."

"Very interesting," said Jimmy, "and to what School do they belong?"

"They are not really school-girls now."

"No I can see that."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I mean to say. They are young ladies aren't they?"

"Yes they are young ladies from a very select finishing school."

"Nicely finished too," said Jimmy eying the girls.

"I think we will be moving along," said the leader, with anger in her voice. "Come along girls, we must go. This person wants to be alone with his . . . . brothers."

Two digs in the space of a few minutes and here was Jimmy with a trump card up his sleeve and unable, because of the decencies, to use it.

Man has to put up with many indignities when observing the precepts of the gentleman's code.

"Did you get anything?" asked Madge, when he rejoined her.

"Yes I got plenty, but that is by the way. I did discover however that those damsels were 'tourists' just as you said."

"I knew it," said Madge between her teeth. "The stage is being set for the biggest coup in years. The sooner we get hold of those papers the better it will be for the peace of New Zealand."

Chapter VIII.

That night, when all was quiet, Jimmy made his way cautiously to Madge's room. He found that enterprising young lady busy at a small table arranging an apparatus which he recognised as having something to do with taking photostat pictures.

"Might as well have everything all ready," she said, glancing at him over her shoulder as he came in. "What time is it?"

Jimmy glanced at his wristlet watch. "It's half-past eleven."

Madge made a final adjustment, then she came over and sat on the bed. She patted a place at the side of her and invited him to sit down.

"Do you think Claude is asleep?" she asked, gently removing an arm that had slipped round her waist.

"I heard him snoring as I passed his room, but don't you think we had better wait for an hour or so, just to make sure?"

"You mean 'just to make love'."

Madge rose to her feet. "I think we had better start now," she announced.

Jimmy sighed and got to his feet.

They tip-toed along the passage.

Outside Claude's door they paused and listened. They could hear a steady snoring accompanied by a whistling obligato. "He must do that last bit through his teeth," whispered Jimmy.

Jimmy turned the handle slowly and opened the door. They slipped inside.

The small leather suit case was easy to find. Their first piece of luck was to find that the suit-case was not locked.

Claude evidently had faith in New Zealand hospitality.

Madge held a shaded torch whilst Jimmy searched. There were three sets of papers, each fastened together with a brass fastener. One was labelled "Minutes" the second "Constitution B.S." the third "Marriage Act."

Jimmy gathered the papers together.

A few minutes later they were back in Madge's room.

Madge would have liked to flop on the bed and give herself up to a few sighs

of relief but there was no time for that.

Whilst Jimmy was reading the "Minutes" she got herself busy photographing the other sheets one by one.

If anyone had asked Madge, later, if her hand trembled during the operation, she would have admitted quite frankly that not only her hand but also her legs trembled.

The task was completed at last.

"Anything in the 'Minutes'," she asked, as she pinned the other sheets together.

"Nothing of great importance."

Madge thrust the documents into Jimmy's hands. "Return these at once before our luck changes, and then go straight to bed. I'll show you the proofs in the morning."

Jimmy would have lingered but he saw the force of Madge's reasoning.

. . . .

When a man has nearly completed a perilous undertaking he sometimes is a little careless.

Jimmy had succeeded in restoring the documents to their rightful place but when

he started to walk to the door he tripped over a mat.

He made but the slightest shuffling noise, but when he looked apprehensively towards the bed his blood ran cold for he saw a hand reaching up to a switch above the bed.

Quick as lightning he hurled himself forward, grabbed at the bed clothes and threw them round the head of the occupant. There was a gurgling noise as Jimmy wrapped the bedclothes round and round the struggling shape.

Claude let out a blood-curdling yell, and as Jimmy made for the passage he heard a dull thud as the human bundle rolled off the bed to the floor.

He had just reached the shadow of a linen-press, when Mrs. Cumber-Glubber's bedroom door opened. That lady was clad in a long red dressing gown and hair curlers. He saw her cross the passage and enter Claude's room. She had a golf club in her hand.

Claude had somehow got to his feet and though still encumbered about the legs with bedclothes, he had managed to un-

cover his face. He was in time to see a dim shadow approaching with some weapon.

Claude's ancient Norman blood was up.

He took a swinging swipe at the shadow.

The swipe caught Mrs. Cumber-Glubber across the bridge of her nose.

She gave out a yell of pain and let fly with the golf club.

Claude, in an attempt to dodge the blow, got entangled around the feet with the bedclothes and tripped forward on his hands. He was just trying to raise himself when Mrs. Cumber-Glubber kicked him sharply on the seat.

He shot forward like a missile from a catapult and the next moment his head disappeared into the interior of a cabin trunk.

The lid closed on him with a snap.

Had it not been that some bedclothes were still wrapped round his neck, he would have shared the same fate as those inquisitive mice who sniff at pieces of baited cheese.

At that moment Mr. Dentone arrived

and switched on the light. Mrs. Cumber-Glubber, blinking in the direction of the cabin trunk, recognised the visible portion of the "body in the trunk" as the seat of the last of the Cumber-Glubbers. Making strange bleating noises like a mother sheep she hurried forward and released her nephew.

"God bless my soul," exclaimed Mr. Dentone. "Whatever is the matter?"

"Looks like a game of hide and seek," said Jimmy, who had now joined his father.

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber was crooning over her nephew.

"Claudums, my pet, are you hurt?"

Claude wrenched the bedclothes from his body.

"I have been attacked by a burglar," he shouted.

"No lovie, it was I," confessed his aunt. "You see I didn't know . . ."

"This was before you came in," said Claude. He stood for a moment thinking, then he dashed to his suitcase and made a frantic search.

"Anything missing?" asked his aunt, who was now beginning to realise that

someone might have been after the documents which she knew were usually kept in that case.

"Nothing missing," said Claude, in a tone of relief.

"Of course there isn't," said Mr. Dentone testily. "If there had been a burglar I would have met him in the passage."

"If you ask me," put in Jimmy. "I would say that our Claude has just had a very bad nightmare."

"Nobody is asking you anything," snapped Mrs. Cumber-Glubber.

"What did you have for supper, Claude?" said Jimmy, ignoring the woman.

Mr. Dentone, answering this query, said that he had noticed that his guest had partaken of a liberal helping of cheese spread over with mustard pickles.

"Ah! Just as I thought," said Jimmy. "Let me tell you this, young man, and I am speaking in my medical capacity, mind you. Cheese is the very worst thing to go to bed on. I remember once . . ."

"It was **not** a nightmare," roared Claude. "I was awakened by a noise and was about to turn on the switch when the

brute attacked me. Hang it all, I felt him. It was no imagination."

"I know, I know," said Jimmy soothingly. "I had the same experience one night after a Capping Dinner. We had soup, oysters, sucking pig, fowl, roast pork and plum pudding. Then, as a night-cap we had meat pie, peas and mash at a pie-cart.

That night I was attacked in bed by a Spaniard.

He gripped my throat and nearly choked me, but I managed to grip his wrist and I held on firmly. A few moments later I woke up and found myself gripping the bed-post. It was all very real at the time, just like your experience."

"I tell you," shouted Claude. "It was a burglar."

"Keep your voice down," growled Mr. Dentone. "If you are so darned sure we will investigate."

They searched the house. The doors, they found, were bolted on the inside, as were also the windows.

The servants rooms being situated along a passage beyond Mr. Dentone's

room, that means of escape was ruled out.

"I hope you are satisfied," said Mr. Dentone. "Unless . . ." and here he fixed his eyes sternly on Mrs. Cumber-Glubber. "Unless your nephew thinks that someone in the house has tried to rob your nephew."

Mr. Dentone could look very stern at times, and on this occasion even Mrs. Cumber-Glubber looked uncomfortable.

She gave a nervous laugh. "Of course my nephew would never think of such a thing." She pushed Claude into his room. "Now, no more nightmares, dearie. Go to bed and sleep on your side."

Claude could be heard mumbling to himself as they departed to their rooms.

Jimmy was looking forward to the conference with Madge the following night, not only on account of the photographed documents but because it would be in the nature of a farewell chat.

Madge had everything ready when he slipped into her room.

"This Cumber-Glubber is absolutely mad," was her greeting.

"Have you only just discovered that?" said Jimmy, as he took a seat and helped

himself to a cigarette.

"Oh, I knew it all right, but I never thought any would-be dictator, man or woman, could be so crazy as to think out such a Constitution as this." She tapped the photostat copies with the back of her hand. "Listen to this . . ."

Constitution of the First New Zealand Women's Government

The Government shall consist of a President, Vice President, Twelve Senators and Forty Members of Parliament. The Members of Parliament will be elected every three years, but the Vice President and Senators will remain in office during the pleasure of the President.

The President will have absolute power and may implement any legislation without consulting Senate or Parliament.

All Banks and Services shall be under the direct control of the President.

All women over twenty shall have a vote and shall be termed in the New State as "The People."

Men will not be allowed to vote and will be termed "The Chattels of the People."

Except in the case of hard labour, all positions in Business, Shops and Offices, as well as all professions shall be taken over by "The People."

"The Chattels" (or men) will be organised into Labour Groups and will be given work according to their physical abilities.

All men on reaching the age of twenty-one, will, unless permanently incapacitated, be liable for marriage within forty-eight (48) hours notice (See Marriage Act, Clause 2),

"A very pleasant liability," said Jimmy.

"Here is something about education," said Madge.

All males will share, together with females, the benefit of Free Education which, in the case of males must include Cookery, Dressmaking, and Knitting.

Males at High Schools and other Secondary Schools must have included in their studies "The Feeding and Care of Baby" . . .

Jimmy sat up at this. "The woman's mad," he cried.

"There is more of it," said Madge, but I will give you a copy to study in your spare time. It will give you an idea of what is in store for you men."

"Switch over to the 'Marriage Act'," said Jimmy, "I simply must hear that."

"Very well," smiled Madge, "Here it is . . ."

The Marriage Act

Every male on reaching the age of twenty-one must register, when he will be issued with a badge bearing his number in white figures on a green background. Men already married at the time of the Act coming into force will wear a number badge on a red background. Widowers and discarded husbands will wear a mauve badge.

Any female (providing she has paid all her levies up to date) may, if she so desires, take the number of a man she may fancy and forthwith make application to "The People's Court" to have this man allotted to her as a husband. Providing no prior application has been made, she will be issued with a warrant and may immediately proceed to take into custody the

aforesaid man as a husband.

Any man resisting the execution of such Warrant may be taken by force.

After the magistrate has duly attested the union, the husband elect, will be given 48 hours leave of absence (except in the case of stubborn subjects) to make any necessary arrangements at his previous place of abode, and will then immediately report for duty.

All property and monies shall be vested in the wife.

The husband shall be the chattel of the wife, and shall be required either to continue service in the Labour Group or remain at home for domestic duties.

In the case of a husband becoming totally incapacitated, the wife, on completing Form 426, may have him transferred to a Home, where he will become a charge of the State. If however, the husband has served his wife for twenty-five years or over (not including periods of sickness) he becomes the sole responsibility of his wife and must be allowed to live in her home.

The wife is responsible for any funeral expenses incurred over the loss of a hus-

band, except in the case of one who dies within six months of the marriage when the State will pay half the expenses.

A widow may make application for a new husband providing she can prove to the Court that the death of the first one was not due to carelessness.

Although the wife has full control over her husband, and may, under the Act, inflict any necessary punishment for the purpose of discipline, she is liable, in the case of extreme cruelty, to be prosecuted on the information of an Inspector of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. This is necessary in order to preserve the species.

Jimmy laughed at this last clause.

"It is evident," he said, "that the great Cumber-Glubber recognises the fact that even a Women's Government cannot continue for ever without the primary producer.

"Even so," Madge pointed out, "the President in the event of men becoming too plentiful, could waive that last clause and declare an open season for a year or two."

"Taking it all round," said Jimmy, "It looks as if we will have our hands full squashing this plot of hers. Tell me have you discovered where you are going to-morrow."

"Not yet, but when we reach our destination, I will wire you. I have an idea that things will move quickly from now on."

Chapter IX.

Two days later, Jimmy received a wire from Madge. Jimmy was to proceed to Napier at once.

Our hero never expected that he would be spending his vacation serving New Zealand, and roving all over the place like a detective of fiction, but he was happy to be of service. He had originally planned to go pig-shooting. On such occasions he usually took with him one Herbert Trotters, a little Cockney who was a storeman at his father's works. He decided that it might not be amiss to take this worthy with him to Napier.

"We will not be going pig-shooting this year," he said when he called at the works to make arrangements with Bert.

Bert's face fell, "Blimey," he said, sorrowfully.

"We are going dame-hunting instead."

Bert was a batchelor of many years standing and he didn't like the sound of this.

"You can count me out," he said with conviction. "I ain't going to run after no dames."

Jimmy then told him what was afoot. Bert listened with an open mouth.

"You wouldn't like this country ruled by women would you?" said Jimmy.

Bert lit his pipe with smug complacency.

"It's all the same to me who's in power, as long as I can keep my job and 'ave three meals a day."

Jimmy had not mentioned the Marriage Act. He decided to do so now and upset this pipe-sucking philosopher.

"Now look here Bert, suppose you were on a bus and a woman came up to you suddenly, tapped you on the shoulder and said. 'I want you, Herbert Trotters. I want you for a husband."

"I would tell her to run up a gum-tree."

"But supposing she had a warrant for your arrest and had power to carry your off by force."

"I'd like to see her try."

"My dear man, that is one of the new

laws if this woman comes into power."

"Blimey!"

"You wouldn't have a dog's chance. Now, are you coming with me or not?"

Bert swore an oath. "You bet I will. Us men 'ave got to stick together over this business.

. . . .

Madge met them on arrival at Napier. Jimmy introduced Bert as a new ally.

"We had better go to the beach," said Madge. "We can talk there undisturbed."

They found a seat on the Marine Parade, near the baths. Madge told them that Mrs. Cumber-Glubber was going out to Taradale the next day to have a conference with some of the Brown Skirt leaders.

A party of female "tourists" posing as an English Travel Club were in camp out there and were going through all sorts of training. Some of them were in Napier at that moment, sightseeing.

While Madge was speaking, a crowd of girls came out of the bath house.

They seemed to be a party and they were laughing and talking.

Fine strapping girls they were, and their splendid figures were shown to advantage by their chic bathing costumes. Even Bert, the woman-hater, sat up and took notice.

The girls ran down to the beach and were soon dancing merrily amongst the breakers.

"There they go," said Madge. "Every one a brown skirt."

"You don't say," said Jimmy with interest.

"Blimey," said Bert, "if them's Brown Skirts, I wouldn't mind being dragged off a bus and carried off by one of them."

"Oh, you men!" said Madge in disgust. "I can see that when Mrs. Cumber-Glubber brings off her coup, you will all drop into her hands like ripe plums. Can't you see, these girls have been specially picked to bring about a bloodless revolution? After the old girl seizes power, she'll see to it that the plain dames will be kept in the background. When you weak men see all those pretty girls parading the street with tommy-guns, you won't lift a finger to defend your liberty. You'll just stand by

with your eyes popping out of your heads. You'll think Utopia has come to New Zealand."

"There you are," said Jimmy to Bert, "be warned in time. Remember the sugar coated pill. And talking of pills what do you think of that old bird over there, talking to the girls."

"Holy Moses, is she a Brown Skirt?"

"She is."

"Suffering cats, I'd run a mile from her."

"She'll probably run a mile to grab you when the **day** comes."

"Like smoke, she will! She'll never get the chance, because we are going to bust this little show, see?"

"Spoken like a man," said Jimmy.

. . . . .

The camp of the English Women's Travel Club was situated just outside Taradale, in a wooded dell by the river.

Jimmy and Bert approached the gate and were confronted by a well proportioned young damsel.

"Are you wanting anything?" she asked.

"Just looking round. Interested in camps you know. I was in the Scouts once," said Jimmy.

"We are **not** Boy Scouts," said the damsel loftily.

"I'll say you're not," grinned Bert.

"Don't be impertinent," snapped the female.

"Come on Bert, let's get away from here," said Jimmy. "It is clear we are not wanted."

As they turned to go, a large car came into sight. The two men stepped back into the shadow of a tree.

The car drew up at the gate and Jimmy recognised one of the occupants as Mrs. Cumber-Glubber. The girl opened the gate and the car passed through.

"That's Mrs. Cumber-Glubber," said Jimmy, as he led Bert a little way down the road.

"The duce, it is?" Blimey, what a snitcher."

"She has come down for a conference," explained Jimmy, "and I am going to listen in. Slip through the hedge there before we are seen."

Once through the hedge they began to reconnoitre. The camp, they discovered, was in a hollow a little away from the river. They were in time to see Mrs. Cumber-Glubber being greeted by the camp leader, who then said something to the girls standing around. The girls, who had evidently been told to make themselves scarce, ran in the direction of the river

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber and party went into the tent.

"Now Bert, you keep watch hereabouts whilst I sneak up to the tent. If you see anyone coming, give a low whistle."

Jimmy left his companion and crawled towards the tent, taking whatever cover that was available enroute.

When Jimmy had disappeared from view, Bert sat down to wait. He could hear shrill shouts of laughter from the direction of the river. Evidently the girls had decided to do a spot of bathing during the conference.

No harm in popping down just for a minute to have a look at them, thought Bert.

He wormed his way down the grassy slope to a belt of small bush, and from this vantage point he got a good view of the clearing at the side of the river. There was a small dressing tent on the green, and before this, the young ladies disported themselves in luxury beneath the hot sun.

Some were in the river, playing with a large ball.

Having watched them for a while, Bert decided to return to his post.

It was not to be, however, for, at that moment a large hand gripped his shoulder like a vice.

"Snooping, eh?" said a husky feminine voice.

Herbert Trotter had fallen into the hands of the female Company Sergeant Major of the Brown Skirts.

This brawny amazon yanked Bert to his feet. Bert was only a wee chappie so there was nothing much he could do about it.

His captor gave a shrill whistle and she was joined by others.

Their eyes were alight with joyous expectation like children at a party who

had just been shown the birthday cake.

The Company Sergeant Major was sterner of countenance. She viewed all intruders as possible spies.

"Take him to headquarters," she ordered.

Judge the concern of Jimmy, therefore, when a few moments later, he beheld from his place of concealment, a party of girls, with Bert a prisoner in their midst.

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber and the Camp Leader came to the door of the tent on hearing the commotion.

The Company Sergeant Major made her report.

"What have you to say for yourself?" snapped Mrs. Cumber-Glubber, bending over Bert like a bird of prey.

"I was doing no 'arm, honest I wasn't" moaned Bert.

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber at close quarters had put the fear of God into him.

"I was just sitting like and watching these young ladies, and minding my own business as the saying is . . ."

"You are nothing but a Peeping Tom,"

snapped Mrs. Cumber-Glubber.

She had put him down as such. He didn't look sufficiently intelligent to be a spy.

"What shall we do with him?" asked the girls.

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber looked at the expectant faces of her brood of young ladies. She had a mother's heart, and she decided to be indulgent to her chicks.

"Throw him in the river," she commanded.

She turned and went inside. One would have thought that such an order was an everyday affair so far as she was concerned.

The girls, with a whoop of joy, pounced on the unfortunate Bert and, lifting him shoulder high, carried him off to the bathing pool.

The girls in the water were clamouring for him like children at a free scramble for chocolates.

They were not kept waiting long. Bert was heaved high into the air, and fell with a splash in their midst. They pounced on him and ducked him over and over again.

Finally he was allowed to stagger out of the water. Once out he ran for dear life, followed by ribald laughter.

And what of Jimmy. Why did he not come to Bert's rescue?

Alas it is expedient that one should suffer for the cause of mankind.

Jimmy, with that callousness which even Generals must show in the height of battle, had left Bert to his fate, in the cause of greater things, that of listening to a Conference which planned to change the whole history of New Zealand and the status of man.

He found Bert later behind a bush, putting on his clothes, which he had partially dried in the sun. He trudged along the road, with Jimmy, a very much wrinkled edition of his former self.

On reaching the hotel at Taradale, Jimmy played Sir Philip Sydney and gave his comrade-in-arms a drink. Bert's need in this respect was greater than his.

Chapter X.

We now find Jimmy at the Mount Cook Tourists Office in Timaru, making certain enquiries.

He had discovered, when listening to the Conference at Taradale, that Mrs. Cumber-Glubber was to proceed to The Hermitage at Mount Cook, and there meet the South Island organisation of the Brown Skirts for a final Conference before returning to Wellington for the Great Day.

Madge had suggested that Jimmy should try and get accommodation at The Hermitage before the Cumber-Glubbers arrived, thus making his presence there appear as a coincidence, nothing more.

Jimmy had difficulty in securing accommodation because of the heavy booking of the North of England Ladies' Alpine Club.

He was lucky, however, to get a room in the new wing overlooking the famous mountain.

It was with well feigned surprise that he greeted Mrs. Cumber-Glubber and Claude when they arrived at The Hermit-

age a few days later.

He fussed round them in a way that annoyed Mrs. Cumber-Glubber. He even took one of Claude's suit-cases and accompanied him upstairs.

Half way up the stairs he drew Claude's attention to a notice "Guests are requested not to wear their alpine boots when going to their bedrooms."

"Make a note of that," he said. "The manager does not like guests going to bed with their boots on. Remember you are not in England now, Claude my boy."

"Mind you own business," snapped Claude.

"Everyone's business is one's own business at The Hermitage," said Jimmy. "You'll soon discover that when you have been here a day or two."

Claude was not at all pleased when he discovered that his room was next to Jimmy's. Less pleased when Jimmy held a party in his room that night and kept Claude awake until three in the morning.

Nor was Claude the only one who was displeased. Madge also was annoyed, because, that same night on coming from the

bathroom, she saw several of the best looking Brown Skirts slipping into Jimmy's room.

She taxed him with this the next morning.

"Fancy you distrusting me," said Jimmy, with a hurt look. "Don't you realise that a good spy must fraternise with the enemy if he is to get hold of vital information."

"Judging from the laughter last night, you didn't seem to be treating them as enemies," said Madge tartly, "and what about the tall dark girl. I distinctly saw her wink at you at breakfast as she passed your table."

"You mean Ruth Sommerfield. Why she is the Chief Storm-Trooper of the Wellington District. I simply must be nice to her. I am taking her out this afternoon. She could tell me a lot."

"I bet she could," said Madge, dryly. "Well, I am warning you, Jimmy Dentone. Any monkey business and I am done with you for good."

Thus she left him with this "Sword of Damocles" hanging over his head.

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber and the "Ladies' Alpine Club," accompanied by Madge, the latter, laden with a picnic basket, left that afternoon for Red Lake. It was clear that a Conference was in the offing.

Ruth Sommerfield stayed in her room at the Hermitage, suffering from a "splitting headache."

After the party had left, however, she made a wonderful recovery and came down into the lounge to join Jimmy.

The two then tramped off in the direction of Kea Point.

Jimmy's friendship with Ruth, though of short duration, had made wonderful headway. It is hard to say exactly how these things happen in places like the Hermitage, but it does happen. Perhaps it is the mountain air. Perhaps it is because Mount Cook is thousands of feet above worry level. Or perhaps it is the devilled kidneys which they give you for breakfast up there. Whatever it is, it seems to work.

Even the Brown Skirts (the young Storm Troopers that is) were not immune from the friendly atmosphere of this famous mountain hostelry.

Anyone seeing them dancing with the other guests in the lounge on the night of arrival, would have found it hard to believe that these same strapping amazons would at an early date if all went well, be patrolling the cities and towns of New Zealand with tommy-guns.

In this respect they differed little from the male soldier, who, though he may be doing a spot of sticky work on the battlefield on the following day, can usually find time to be quite natural the night before in the drawing rooms and dance halls of the country of occupation.

Jimmy indeed thought that they were not a bad crowd at all, but on glancing round and seeing Mrs. Cumber-Glubber chatting to Mrs. Crippongorger, he realised, with regret, that the running of the country would not be left to these fair young storm troopers.

He had danced with a number of these girls, but it was Ruth who finally monopolised his time and had him carving slices of chicken for her in the supper room. It was she who suggested a little party in one of the rooms and it was thus that a small

group of lads and lasses finally finished up the festivities in Jimmy's room.

It would be libel to say that Jimmy was being untrue to Madge, because, as we have said before, he belonged to that very select and well bred strata of society known as "The University Student."

He was merely making friends with the Chief Storm Trooper of the Wellington District, of the League of Brown Skirts.

The fact that her name was Ruth, that she had a divine figure, and that her long dark lashes curtained a pair of "come hither" eyes; was purely incidental.

The thing that mattered most to Jimmy was that he was serving his Country.

Well here they were. Jimmy and his "Duty," on their way to Kea Point.

It is not a long step from The Hermitage to Kea Point, but it has this advantage over some of the longer walks . . . you are out of sight of the Hermitage and everybody within a few minutes.

One gets a good view of the mountains from Kea Point and one can not blame a girl just out from England, if, in

a moment of forgetfulness, she hugs her companion in sheer ectasy over the wonder of it all.

That is just what Ruth did.

Knowing thus, Ruth's love for scenery, Jimmy perhaps should not have followed up by showing her the snow-capped peak of Mount Cook, because that lady was so thrilled over this mighty spectacle, that she gave Jimmy a hug that nearly took his breath away.

Ruth knew her "Swedish Drill" — she had not become a Leader of Storm Troopers for nothing. She was a fast worker.

Within ten minutes of leaving The Hermitage, in fact long before Mrs. Cumber-Glubber and party had reached the foothills leading to the Red Lake, Ruth had Jimmy reclining across her lap and was stroking his hair whilst she told him what a wonderful country, this New Zealand was.

Jimmy was inclined to agree with her.

But let it not be said that Jimmy was forgetting his "Mission." He started to question her, albeit he still rested contentedly with his head on her lap, for the

afternoon was warm and enervating .

"How long are you staying in New Zealand?" he asked.

"A long long time," she replied.

"How will you fill in your time? Got a job or something?"

"Ah, if you only knew," breathed Ruth. "I feel that I would like to tell you Everything."

"Go on then," prompted Jimmy the Master Spy.

Ruth shook her head and stroked his hair. "I am afraid that I cannot tell even you."

She gazed down at him with soulful eyes. Suddenly she clasped him to her, so suddenly indeed that she nearly put his shoulder blade out of joint.

"Jimmy, Jimmy. Look at me."

Jimmy looked at her. She was easy on the eyes.

Ruth held him tightly in her arms like a mother protecting her young.

"Jimmy do you love me?"

"Well I . . . I . . . ."

Ruth continued speaking, she didn't seem to bother whether Jimmy replied in

the affirmative or otherwise.

To a Storm Trooper such as she, who was practically standing or sitting on the threshold of the "New Order," and with one eye on Clause Two of the new Marriage Act, such a reply was neither here nor there.

"I want you to make a promise, Jimmy."

"And what is that?"

"If ever within the next few weeks you find yourself in grave danger, I want you to remember and use these words. 'Ruth Sommerfield has spoken for me'."

Jimmy pretended to look puzzled. He knew of course what she was driving at. When the Great Coup came off and the New Order was established along with the new Marriage Act, Jimmy might find himself in grave danger indeed.

Some damsel might suddenly claim him under the Act.

Ruth was evidently getting in early.

"This is all so puzzling," he said. "How can I possibly be in grave danger within a few weeks, or the next few years for that matter. What is the danger any-

how?"

Ruth shook her head. "I am afraid I can't tell you that. Just regard it as a woman's intuition. When the danger comes, you will recognise it at once. It may happen anywhere. On a bus or on the street or at a party. You need have no fear, however, I shall be able to help you. I shall have 'influence'."

"Ah!" said Jimmy.

"At present you must trust me. Remember these words. 'Ruth Sommerfield has spoken for me.' Just repeat those words, Jimmy, so that you will not forget."

"Jimmy mumbled the words. 'Ruth Sommerfield has spoken for me."

"Splendid!" cried Ruth, holding him tighter. She sighed happily, and then whispered, "Doesn't the sun's rays look beautiful, shining on those distant hills?"

Jimmy couldn't see the sun's rays nor the distant hills, because his nose was pressed firmly against Ruth's shoulder, and had it not been for the sound of footsteps of some casual stroller, he would have suffocated.

Chapter XI.

The dinner gong had gone and most of the guests were in the dining room, tucking away the good food for which the Hermitage is famous throughout the world.

Jimmy had just left his room and was making for the stairs when he felt a sharp pinch in the seat of his pants.

He sprang into the air with a startled cry.

"Well, dreamer," said Madge, who had done the seat pinching.

"I was not dreaming."

"Oh yes you were. You were dreaming of Ruth."

"Indeed I wasn't."

"You can't deny that you have been with her all afternoon."

"How did you know?"

"My dear man, when I heard that she had stayed behind with a so-called headache, I knew her game. It is an old trick you know."

"Is it?" said Jimmy. "Dear me, how one learns."

"I'll bet you learnt plenty, but very little about the Big Coup I'll warrant."

"There are Coups and Coups," Jimmy pointed out.

"I am well aware of that," said Madge. "Well, whilst you were being 'couped' by this adventuress, I was busy working for the good of New Zealand."

"Good girl."

"Thank you. Now if you can spare a few minutes from Ruth after dinner, I have a lot to tell you."

"Very well, where shall I see you?"

"In my room."

"Good."

. . . .

After dinner, Jimmy did not bother to take coffee. Ruth, who saw him pass the door of the coffee room, was a little disappointed.

He ran upstairs and knocked on Madge's door.

She bade him enter, and after telling him to be seated, she produced a reporters' note book.

"Now, first of all," she began. "The Ladies' Alpine Club which is as you know,

a section of the Brown Skirts, held an important meeting at the Red Lake this afternoon. I was sent, of course, to gather firewood for the afternoon tea."

"And then?"

"And then they got their heads together. Fortunately I found sufficient wood near at hand and I was back hiding behind that little hut up there, in time to hear the important facts. I took notes. The Great Coup is scheduled for the twenty-ninth of January."

Jimmy whistled.

"Good. That means that I shall be carried off by some ravishing damsel to her lair on about the first of February. See Marriage Act, Clause 3."

"You conceited pig," said Madge.

She continued.

"The Prime Minister will be kidnapped sometime after 7 p.m."

"And his body will be found in a trunk, two days later at the Levin Railway Station," said Jimmy.

"Don't be an ass," said Madge. She consulted her notes again.

"The whole Cabinet will be in the

hands of the Brown Skirts by 9 p.m."

"How will they manage that?" asked Jimmy.

"The Brown Skirts plan to make the Prime Minister send out 'invitations to a special caucus'."

"And what about the Union Secretaries? Are the Brown Skirts doing anything about them?" asked Jimmy.

"No, there was no mention of Union Secretaries."

Jimmy smiled. "How little does this Cumber-Glubber know New Zealand. Bad staff work, missing out the Union Secretaries. Now if I were out to take control of New Zealand, I would bag the Trades Union Secretaries first, and eat them, bones and all."

"And then have indigestion, and be no good for anything," Madge pointed out.

"Never thought of that," admitted Jimmy. "Well, carry on, my sweet."

"At 9 p.m. the 'Tourist' Brown Skirts will take over the Radio Stations. All Storm Troopers will stand in readiness at certain meeting places throughout the country."

"And then?"

"On receipt of a specially worded telegram, the Brown Skirts will take over the Police Station and will parade the streets with tommy-guns. The telegrams will be sent out from the Wellington Headquarters."

"Ah, if only we had the address of the Headquarters," said Jimmy.

"I have all that information," said Madge. "Also I took down the addresses of the Headguarters in the various centres."

"You are a wonder," said Jimmy, with admiration in his voice.

Madge would have waved this praise aside, but Jimmy was holding her hands.

"We must now map out a plan of campaign," said Madge.

Jimmy released her hands, took out his pipe and began to fill it.

"Now let me think," he said.

"You are sure it won't hurt you?" asked Madge with mock concern.

"Shush! My brain is beginning to work."

Jimmy applied a match to his pipe. Then he leaned back and puffed smoke

clouds to the ceiling.

Madge watched him with a smile. He was a nice boy, she thought. She went over to the mirror and applied a little lipstick.

"Tell me when you have finished thinking," she said.

There was no answer.

Suddenly Jimmy sprang to his feet.

"I've got it!" he cried, snapping his fingers.

"Got what?"

"A plan."

"Wonders never cease," said Madge.

"It's a good plan," declared Jimmy. "Listen to this."

Madge listened. She had to admit at the end that the plan bore all the marks of good generalship.

"You must leave for Wellington at once," she said. "You have less than a week to put your plan into operation. I will have to stay here until Mrs. Cumber-Glubber leaves for the Capital, but I have full faith in you."

"You trust me to carry out my part of the programme?" asked Jimmy.

"Absolutely."

Jimmy kissed her. "Bless you, my darling."

"And good luck to you," said Madge, returning the kiss with interest.

Chapter XII.

The next morning Madge stood at her window and waved to Jimmy as the bus left the Hermitage.

It would have been unwise to farewell him from the porch downstairs, especially as half the personel of the Ladies' Alpine Club was gathered there to bid him good-bye.

When Jimmy reached Timaru he caught the train to Dunedin, which was strange seeing that Wellington was his goal.

Little time was lost however, because he travelled to Wellington by air the next day.

Whilst in Dunedin he had a conference with one or two students.

He also secured from the Registrar of the Otago University, the home addresses of certain students who were spending their vacation in different parts of the Dominion.

Arriving home he had a long talk with his father who hailed Jimmy's **plan** as equal to the great historic D Day Plan.

Jimmy then spent the rest of the day typing letters. When the mails cleared that night, dozens of letters started on their journey to all parts of New Zealand.

Yes, the carefree Jimmy was definitely "on the job." In this respect Jimmy was acting true to type, the type which has made the sons of the British Empire famous throughout the world.

In all undertakings your Britisher is slow to get moving. He might even regard his responsibilities with something approaching frivolity, but when it comes to the "final round" he completely astonishes and out-manoeuvres his enemy.

The next morning he went down to see Bert Trotters.

His landlady told him that Bert was down at the wharf, fishing.

Bert greeted Jimmy with a look of suspicion.

"I want your assistance," said Jimmy, slapping him on the back.

Bert was not deceived by this appar-

ently harmless approach.

"What do you want?" he asked cautiously.

"The hunt is on, Bert my boy. We take up the trail again. We are going woman-hunting."

"H'indeed," said Bert sarcastically .

"Yes, indeed."

"Well you can 'ave it on your own," declared Bert vehemently. "This chicken ain't going to do no woman-hunting. I've 'ad enough. Blimey, you don't think I'd go amongst that bunch of dames again, do you? Not likely."

"Look here, Bert. If those dames, as you call them, can get away with throwing a harmless citizen into the water when they are not in Power, what do you think they'd do to you when they got into Power."

"They'll never get into power," said Bert, with smug content.

"Oh won't they. Well let me tell you that they will be in power before the end of the month."

"Cripes!" cried Bert in alarm.

He looked around him with fear in his eyes. His eyes flitted everywhere now

in the direction of Lambton Quay, now in the direction of the sea.

For a moment Jimmy thought that the startled Bert would dive into the harbour and swim for it in the general direction of Australia.

Jimmy comforted him with a kindly pat on the shoulder. "Don't worry, Bert, my boy. We'll spike their guns, you and I."

"What do you want me to do?" asked Bert, still a little wary.

"Do you know Lemington's Buildings?"

"You mean that big four story building up the street."

"Yes, the one with the big hall on the top floor."

"I know it," said Bert. "I was at a wedding breakfast up there, the time my nephew was married."

Jimmy then told him that the Brown Skirts had booked the hall for the night of the 29th. From there the final word would go out for the Great Coup.

"Now listen to me," said Jimmy. "That night a party of us will be using one

of the offices in the ground floor. The office belongs to a solicitor friend of dad's. Our job will be to intercept the messenger who leaves the building that night with the telegrams and instructions."

"Where do I come in?" asked Bert.

Jimmy told him that there was a small service lift which went up a shaft from the kitchen in the basement to the hall on the top floor. It was used for sending up food when there was a wedding breakfast or a supper dance.

Bert knew all about this because he remembered at the time of his nephew's wedding that all the refreshments were brought up that way and served from a slide in the wall. Yes, he knew all that but what he wanted to know was "Where did he come in."

"You go up in that lift on the night of the 29th and listen-in at the slide."

Bert gasped at this. "But the lift is no bigger than a hen-coop," he protested.

"We know that," said Jimmy, smoothly. "That is why we have selected you, All our crowd are too big and heavy. You are just a wee chap and as light as a

feather. You could pull yourself up by the pulley-rope quite easily. The rope is weighted like a window sash so it will be quite simple."

Bert didn't agree. The pulling up business might be all right but he did not fancy himself suspended like Mahomet's coffin, half way between heaven and earth and, moreover, with only a thin wooden slide between him and Mrs. Cumber-Glubber's creatures.

"I won't do it," he declared.

Jimmy pointed out that it was the only way to hear what was going on in the upper room. There would sure to be someone on guard in the passage. He hinted that the Brown Skirts might succeed in their plan if Bert did not co-operate. He drew vivid pictures of what life would be like under Cumber-Glubber Rule.

Finally Bert gave in and agreed to be "the monkey on the string" as he put it.

. . . .

On the morning of the 29th that eventful day, now regarded by a chosen few as the most crucial day in the history of New Zealand, Jimmy called on Ruth Sommer-

field, who was staying at the Hotel St. George. Ruth was having breakfast in her room. She rose to greet him with a very friendly smile indeed and asked him to take coffee with her. She was beautifully arrayed and looked something like those so-called informal snapshots of film stars in their dressing rooms.

Jimmy found it very hard to imagine that this glorious creature would, before the day was out, be leading a bunch of female thugs with tommy-guns, through the streets of Wellington to take up their positions at certain key points.

The object of Jimmy's visit was to lead the conversation along certain channels and then carelessly drop a piece of information about the movements of the Prime Minister.

Jimmy detected a slight start on the part of Ruth when she heard the information. He continued the conversation for a while longer and then said he had better be going.

Ruth did not try to detain him. In truth she was anxious for him to go, for she was bubbling inside with excitement

and she wanted to dress and hurry to Headquarters with all possible speed.

She did, however, detain him for a moment as he stood at the open door.

"You won't forget to use those words I taught you, if you find yourself in danger," she said.

"If," said Jimmy. He blew her a kiss and was gone.

The rest of the day was a very busy time for Jimmy. He went here and there, and saw this person and that person.

. . . .

Chapter XIII.

About seven o'clock that night a small group of people assembled in the solicitor's office on the ground floor of Lemmington's Buildings.

By a careful arrangement of screens and filing cabinets, the occupants of the office had a good view of the vestibule.

There was Mr. Pennyworth, the solicitor, Mr. John Dentone, Madge, Jimmy, Bert Trotters, a tall military looking gentleman whom Jimmy introduced as Chief Inspector Blodehorn, and four stern looking gentlemen who sat with formidable looking bowler hats on their knees.

As they sat in the dark office, there was not much conversation. All eyes were on the dimly lighted vestibule.

At about half-past seven the Brown Skirts began to arrive. Jimmy recognised amongst the first party, the lady he had met at the zoo. They went upstairs with the exception of a sturdy young lady who remained in the vestibule. She produced a small pocket book and commenced mak-

ing marks in it with a pencil. She was evidently ticking off names because subsequent arrivals each whispered to her and she made entries in the book.

Mrs. Blitherington, Mrs. Crippongorger, and Miss Pottersnype came together. They merely nodded to the door-keeper.

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber, Mrs. Perks-Crofter and Claude arrived a little later. Evidently there were no more to come, because the door-keeper closed her book and followed them upstairs.

The coast was clear.

It was now time for Bert to proceed to the basement.

To provide an innocent motive, he sallied forth from the office, carrying a bucket and broom.

Whistling, he went down into the basement.

A few minutes later he had hauled himself up to the top floor and started his vigil, sitting like a Buddha in the limited space of the service lift.

The conversation in the room was so clear that Bert became nervous at being in such close proximity, but he found com-

fort in the fact that the wooden slide hid him from view.

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber was talking in a conversational tone about what they would do with the Prime Minister and Cabinet after their capture.

Evidently this was not a formal meeting. They appeared to be filling in the time while they waited for the expected arrival of the Prime Minister.

"How long will we keep the Cabinet in custody?" asked Mrs. Crippongorger.

"A few months, I should say," replied Mrs. Cumber-Glubbber. "We must keep them under lock and key until we are firmly established in power. After that they must be absorbed into something or other that will keep them out of mischief."

Miss Pottersnype cleared her throat.

"Would you allow any of the Grand Council to claim these men as husbands under the Act?" she asked hopefully.

Several ladies all started to speak at the same time. Mrs. Cumber-Glubber called them to order and told them to speak one at a time.

"I would like the Minister of Mines,"

said Mrs. Blitherington.

"I would like the Minister of Defence," said Mrs. Perks-Crofter, "He has such nice dreamy eyes."

"I think I will file a claim for the Minister of Railways," said Miss Potter-snype."

"He would be too big a handful for you," said Mrs. Cumber-Glubber. "I would suggest that he would make a suitable mate for Mrs. Crippongorger.

Mrs. Crippongorger was not having any. She said that the Minister for Finance would do her. "He would be more pliable," she said.

Bert gasped at all this. "Blimey," he said, under his breath. These female dragons were casting lots amongst themselfes as if the New Zealand Cabinet Members were so much "booty" to be shared around.

There was silence for a while. The ladies were evidently waiting for their leader to put in a claim. She made no claim, however, so the lady from the zoo asked them to put her name down for the Prime Minister.

Claude then spoke. "You all seem to forget that most of these men have wives already. There is nothing in the Act that allows a Brown Skirt to file a claim for a married man."

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber waved this small detail aside.

"In the interests of my friends, I will bring in a special Order in Council to cover that problem," she said.

Bert thought this was pretty hard on the Cabinet Ministers' wives. To have to start hunting round for new husbands at their time of life, was pretty tough.

Of course there was no need to worry, really. These dames would never get into power. And as for them thinking they could kidnap the Prime Minister—the whole thing was ridiculous.

But was it?

At that moment there was a knock at the door.

Bert heard someone ask for the password.

Within the room there was a great deal of excitement. Two Storm Troopers had entered with a prisoner. Whispers of

"The Prime Minister" were heard by Bert. He could hardly believe it, but he knew that it was true when he heard the voice of Mrs. Cumber-Glubber, saying "Put the Honourable Gentleman over in that chair and keep guard. He should come round any moment. Open that window to give him some air."

Bert was trembling with excitement. He wondered if those down below were aware of the capture. He had better warn them.

He paid out the rope and descended to the basement. Hurrying out of the lift he fell over the bucket but he was up again in a second and was dashing up the stairs as fast as his short legs would carry him.

"They've got the Prime Minister," he gasped, as he tumbled into the office.

He sank into a chair.

"Give me a drink for the love of Mike."

Jimmy obliged, whilst the rest of the company stood round waiting for him to speak.

Having wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, Bert launched into his

narrative. When he had finished his audience exchanged glances.

"We rather thought that they had got their man," said Jimmy, "because it was a large hamper."

"Blimey, did they bring him here in a hamper."

"They did, Bert my boy. We must now move quickly. You, Bert, go back to your post and stay there until you hear from us. Now don't stand there with your mouth open. Get a move on."

Bert got a move on.

Back at his post, Bert was rather worried at the silence at the other side of the slide.

What had happened. Had the Prime Minister died en-route?

He decided to have a peep. He would just open the slide a chink.

Now if Bert had been an observant individual at the time of his nephew's wedding breakfast he would have noticed that when the catch of the slide was lifted, the little door shot back of its own accord, being fitted with a spring.

As soon therefore as Bert lifted the

catch with the aid of his pen-knife, the slide shot back with a whizz. For a moment he stared stupidly at his audience, and sitting there in the box-like lift, cross legged like a tailor, he looked for all the world like a monkey in a cage.

The occupants of the room were as astonished as he, but it was Bert who made the first move. He put the lift in reverse and disappeared from view.

But it was a long way to the basement, and he had travelled only half way when he felt a tug and the next moment he realised that he was being hauled upwards by strong hands.

Fear gave Bert super-human strength.

He gripped the rope with both hands and down he went again.

Life in those few minutes became a life of ups and downs. One moment he was within sight of the basement, the next he was staring at the face of Mrs. Crippongorger.

Her face was not the kind that would launch a thousand ships but it had the effect of launching Bert back to the basement under his own steam.

But never was he allowed those precious seconds which he needed to shoot himself through the opening at the bottom. Finally his strength gave out and he felt himself going upwards to his doom.

On reaching the top floor, a huge hand grasped him by the scuff of the neck and yanked him into the room.

He tried to keep on his feet, but the floor of the hall had been used for dancing. Bert therefore found it necessary to execute a few dance steps in order to keep his balance.

He finally sat down suddenly and found himself gazing upwards into a sky of faces. And such faces. The hardest set of dials ever seen on this side of the Equator.

He scrambled to his feet and backed his way to the wall.

"So it is our little snooper again," said Mrs. Cumber-Glubber with an oily voice. "Dear me, wasn't your ducking sufficient."

She walked slowly towards him as she spoke.

"Keep away," bawled Bert.

"We are not going to hurt you, are

we?" said Mrs. Cumber-Glubber, turning to the ladies present.

"Of course not," said Mrs. Crippon-gorger, "In fact I think I would prefere this nice little man to the Minister of Finance."

"No! No!" cried Alf.

He looked round him wildly.

The Prime Minister was sitting in a chair with his head on his chest. He was evidently still in a state of stupor.

Bert found a certain amount of comfort in the obvious fact that Fate was no respector of persons. Man is more inclined to feel sorry for himself if he finds that calamity has visited only his own particular class.

Still, even so, Bert was far from being happy over his present plight.

The fact that his friends down below might soon take matters in hand was comforting to a certain degree, but not altogether so.

For instance, if Jimmy and Co. started to hammer on the door, there was nothing to stop these Brown Skirts retreating in good order down the fire escape, taking

their prisoners with them. They could then call out the Storm Troopers and surround the building whilst Mrs. Cumber-Glubber started the machinery for the blitz-coup. After that . . .

Bert trembled at the prospect.

Whilst these thoughts were racing through his brain, there came a discreet tap at the door. It was not the sort of summons that might suggest a rescue party.

The door-keeper asked for the password, and Bert heard a female voice without giving the countersign.

The door opened.

After that there was some confusion, because the first to enter was Madge and she was followed closely by the menfolk.

"Keep still, everybody," cried Chief Inspector Blodehorn, brandishing an ugly looking fire-arm.

By way of support, the four gentlemen with bowler hats started to fan the company with similar weapons.

Some of the ladies screamed.

Mrs. Crippongorger made a frantic attempt to get her bulk through the fire-escape window.

She let out an oath as she got jammed in the small opening.

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber's reaction took the form of a loud "damn" which sounded like a bomb exploding.

Claude nervously ran his hand up and down his face.

The Prime Minister, roused by Mrs. Cumber-Glubber's explosive ejaculation, started to look round the room with growing interest.

Mr. Dentone went over and engaged him in conversation, what time Chief Inspector Blodehorn herded the Brown Skirts into a corner.

Bert sat down and calmly started the important business of filling his pipe, eyeing with interest Mrs. Crippongorger's struggling rudder as she tried to extricate herself from the window.

Chapter XIV

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber opened her mouth several times as if she was about to speak, but for once in her life she was speechless.

But when Chief Inspector Blodehorn produced a pair of handcuffs she stepped forward with fear in her eyes and said: "Officer, officer, before you er . . . before you do anything can I have a word with Mr. Dentone."

He looked over at Mr. Dentone and also looked enquiringly at the Prime Minister. Both men nodded.

"Very well," he said, "but make it snappy."

Mr. Dentone walked over to a door leading to an anti-room, followed by Jimmy. They waited for Mrs. Cumber-Glubber to pass through. Claude would have followed but the Chief Inspector waved him back.

After the door had closed behind them, Mrs. Cumber-Glubber wrung her hands.

"Could you **do** anything, Mr. Dentone," she pleaded.

Jimmy had never seen anyone change so quickly. The Leader of the Brown Skirts was the picture of humility.

"We'll get Mr. Pennyworth in," said Jimmy. "He's dad's solicitor you know."

He opened the door and called the solicitor.

Mr. Pennyworth came in and beamed at them.

"Have you got those papers?" asked Mr. Dentone of the lawyer.

"What papers?" asked Mrs. Cumber-Glubber, puzzled.

Mr. Dentone bade her be seated. The men did likewise and Mr. Dentone cleared his throat.

"Mrs. Cumber-Glubber, I am not a man to beat about the bush. When I heard there was to be a raid to-night I came prepared. I knew that you had put yourself in a very serious position and that you would need help. It so happens that I have

influence with the Prime Minister . . ."

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber clasped her hands and a ray of hope came into her eyes. "I knew I could count on you," she breathed.

Mr. Dentone coughed. "As I said before, I came prepared. There is a little matter over the transfer of some shares . ."

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber sat up at this and some of her old autocratic manner returned.

"So," she barked. "It is blackmail."

"Tut, tut," said Mr. Pennyworth.

Mr. Dentone smiled. "No, my dear Mrs. Cumber-Glubber. This is not blackmail. It is business. I have come into this affair purely from a business point of view. Apart from that I would not care what the police did with you. You are nothing to me, not even a friend. Strictly speaking you richly deserve the punishment that may come to you. Normally I would be happy to see you get your deserts."

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber had still a little fight left. "So you are going to bully me into giving you the shares in return for your intervention in this matter," she said

scornfully. "You would take advantage of a helpless woman."

"Not so," replied Mr. Dentone. "I have told you that this is business, and it is honest business. For the last year I have offered to pay you the market price for those shares. You held out because you wanted to pick my brain. You intended to hold back, while I did all the planning and thinking and then reap the benefit of my endeavours. To-day you are in such a jam that I could, if I were unscrupulous, make you give me those shares to save you from imprisonment, but I am going to be fair. Once again I offer you full price for those shares. If you behave in a sensible and business like manner I will use my influence. Otherwise I see no reason whatever, why I should interest myself in your affairs."

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber was still stubborn. She turned to Mr. Pennyworth.

"Mr. Pennyworth is it a serious crime to kidnap the Prime Minister?"

Mr. Pennyworth stroked his chin. "That of course is a matter of opinion. There are those who would say that the

person who kidnapped the Prime Minister was a public benefactor, but the law would say that it was a very serious offence. That, coupled with the planning of a revolution by force and perhaps bloodshed would be very damning in the eyes of a Judge and Jury. In some foreign countries you would be shot. Even in England men have been beheaded for less. In a tolerant country like New Zealand, you might get off with ten or fifteen years' imprisonment. Or you may be just laughed out of the country. There are some who would consider ridicule worse than death."

Mrs. Cumber-Glubber silently agreed with this last thought. She thought of her friends and enemies in England. How they would twitter and laugh behind their hands. That would be unbearable. If only the thing could be hushed up.

"I will sign," she said, "if you can hush this matter up and let me and my friends return to England."

"That I will guarantee," said Mr. Dentone.

The transfer was signed and Mr. Dentone handed her his cheque. She then re-

turned to the hall, to wait her fate.

The Prime Minister, on being called, joined the men in the ante-room.

If Mrs. Cumber-Glubber had witnessed the meeting, she would have choked with wrath. Jimmy greeted the Prime Minister by giving him a hearty slap on the back.

"A wonderful performance, Angus, my lad," he said.

Angus grinned, "Chloroform makes a man rare and thirsty," he said, looking round the room.

"There's nothing to drink here," laughed Jimmy, "but we will give you all you want later. Did you take in much chloroform?"

"Just a wee bit." When they grabbed me outside the house and held the pad to my nose I held my breath and pretended to go right out. Of course I kept my head on my chest in the hall out there, so they couldn't have a good look at me."

Mr. Pennyworth who had not seen Angus at close quarters in the hall, now looked keenly at him.

"Why, dash it all, it's Angus your gardener, all dressed up."

Jimmy then told the solicitor how he had called on Ruth Sommerfield and had dropped the news that the Prime Minister would be dining with his father that night, but would be leaving shortly after dinner to attend a meeting. How that Angus had been dressed to look the part, and how his father saw him off after dinner calling him by the Prime Minister's name as he said good-night.

Mr. Pennyworth listened with interest, but was a little annoyed when the narrative was completed.

He turned to Mr. Dentone and there was reproach in his voice as he said: "John, we have been friends, man and boy, for the last forty-five years and yet you have treated me like a stranger, and kept this joke all to yourself."

Jimmy explained. "It was necessary for you to think that Angus was the Prime Minister, otherwise you could not in truth have told Mrs. Cumber-Glubber the seriousness of her 'crime'.

"Remember you are a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of New Zealand and for you to have known that this man was not

the Prime Minister and for you to have implied to Mrs. Cumber-Glubber that he was, would have made you guilty of unprofessional conduct. It was also necessary for you to think that those chaps out there were real policemen."

Mr. Pennyworth opened his eyes in surprise. "So they are duds too," he said. "I rather wondered how you were going to square the police over this business."

"You should have known better," said Mr. Dentone. "If you had been in the habit of following up football like a human being, you would have recognised 'Chief Inspector Blodehorn' as the best All Black forward that has ever been seen on the playing field for a quarter of a century."

"And the other fellows in the bun hats?" asked Mr. Pennyforth. "They looked very solemn and convincing to me."

"Those gentlemen," said Jimmy, "are students of the Otago University. "They are budding lawyers by the way, so it is a good thing that they are versed in the arts of being convincing."

Jimmy then went on to say that similar bodies of solemnly convincing gentle-

men, complete with bun hats, were at that very moment walking into the headquarters of the Brown Skirts in different cities and towns and announcing that the game was up. In each case the 'tourists' would be told to be out of the country within four days, and the few New Zealand members would be advised to resume normal life, this advice being followed by a hint that they would be under observation for many years to come.

This same ultimatum was given that night by "Chief Inspector Blodehorn" to Mrs. Cumber-Glubber and party. These ladies were very thankful indeed at the generosity of the New Zealand police. They were glad to shake the dust of Wellington from their feet.

Chapter XV.

Why was it that the biggest news story of all time, failed to make an appearance in the New Zealand Press?

In truth Madge had been a little worried at having to report to her editor that the expense of her assignment had not resulted in a "story."

But there was no need to worry.

It so happened that her editor, on spending a holiday in Queenstown had met a very charming English girl and had returned to the city an engaged man. His fiancee had confessed that she had been one of the 'tourist' Brown Skirts, but that she would be a good girl in future.

So the editor, instead of admonishing Madge for spoiling a good story, actually commended her for her tact and he showed his gratitude later by giving Madge a very handsome wedding present when she married Jimmy.

Nor was the Queenstown 'tourist' the only Brown Skirt to stay in New Zealand and take over the reins of 'Domestic Government.'

One of Jimmy's 'detectives' fell in love with the door-keeper of the Dunedin Headquarters of the Brown Skirts.

He liked the look of her, and she liked his bowler hat.

Consequently she was still in New Zealand when the four days notice had expired.

A divinity student helping in the Auckland raid, fell in love with a Brown Skirt Corporal. With such an efficient Storm Trooper for a wife that ecclesiastical gentleman will doubtless have very little trouble with the difficult members of his congregation.

There were similar cases in Wellington and Christchurch of Jimmy's student 'Detectives' taking their raided Brown Skirts to wife.

Which all goes to prove that a girl can 'get her man' by the good old fashioned methods without requiring the aid of Clause Two of a new Marriage Act.

And what of Ruth, the most fascinating and alluring of all the Brown Skirts.

Well she is still in New Zealand and at present unattached.

If any of my readers would like to send me a cheque for £10,000, I will gladly give him her telephone number.

Just a final note concerning a communication that passed between the New Zealand editor and the man in England who first sent the tip about Mrs. Cumber-Glubber.

This man found in his post one morning a letter with a New Zealand post-mark. In it was an English-bound steamship passenger list with Mrs. Cumber-Glubber's name underlined. Attached to the list was a slip of paper on which were the words,

Mrs. CUMBER-GLUBBER

Returned With

Thanks

THE END

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